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Subject: EPA Statement on Data from New Mexico to Navajo Nation from Gold King Mine Release

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EPA Statement on Data from New Mexico to Navajo Nation from Gold King Mine Release

FARMINGTON, NM - Today, EPA is releasing additional water quality data for the Animas and San Juan Rivers from the Northern Border of New Mexico to Navajo Nation.

To assess the impacts of the release at the Gold King Mine water quality samples were collected from the Northern Border of New Mexico to Navajo Nation at numerous intervals beginning on Aug. 5, 2015. Samples were taken prior to the plume's arrival to establish a baseline for water quality comparisons. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury.

Surface water samples were collected on Friday, August 7, 2015, at four (4) locations prior to arrival of the plume, and on Saturday, August 8, 2015, at nine (9) locations after arrival of the plume along the Animas and San Juan Rivers in New Mexico. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury. The results indicate the concentration of metals in the river do not appear to cause harm to aquatic life, livestock, crops and people using the river for recreation activities.

Analysis now shows that water quality for the Animas and San Juan Rivers have returned to pre-event water quality levels. These results are based on validated sampling data collected from Aug. 5 to Aug. 9, 2015.

EPA has shared this data with state, local and tribal officials in New Mexico to assist them in their decisions regarding the on-going use of water resources. EPA plans to continue to monitor, analyze and share data for downstream river segments as it becomes available.